

Family Policy Council Partners with WDVA

The Family Policy Council and the Washington State Department of Veterans Affairs recently presented a one day symposium on the needs of returning war zone veterans and their families.

Held in Vancouver, WA, community, state and national leaders came together with top researchers and professionals from law & justice, healthcare and mental health, domestic violence and family support to learn about critical issues facing these returning veterans and their families.

One of the many highlights of the day was learning the 8 battlefield skills that keep military personnel safe in the war zone, but don't work as well in family, community and work life at home. Identified and presented by James Munroe, Ed.D with the Boston VA Healthcare System, these 8 skills, which may interfere with a soldier's readjustment, are:

Safety

- Being constantly alert for dangerous situations
- Seeing anything unexpected or out of place as a possible explosive device
- Watching people and looking for escape routes

Trust and the Enemy

- Being suspicious and seeing everyone as a potential enemy
- Being uncomfortable and alert around strangers or crowds
- Checking people for trustworthiness

Mission Orientation

- Focusing only on a single task and not wasting time on unimportant things

Continued on page 2

State Veterans Affairs Receives New Leadership Appointments

John E. Lee and Alfie Alvarado have stepped into the top two leadership roles at the Washington State Department of Veterans Affairs (WDVA), following confirmation of the appointments by Governor Christine Gregoire.

As of Nov. 1 of this year, Lee serves as the agency director and Alvarado serves as deputy director, following the retirement of WDVA's director for the past 8 years, John King.



Lee - a Vietnam War veteran and retired Command Sergeant Major of the U.S. Army - assumes responsibility for the advocacy and outreach for the state's more than 670,000 veterans and their families, as well as

overseeing three veterans homes throughout the state.

"Accepting this appointment is my promise to our state's veterans and their families to honor their service to our country," said Lee. "The challenges they face and the sacrifices they have made require our total commitment to serving them, as they have served us."

A native of West Virginia, Lee entered the U.S. Army in 1968, and spent the next 21 years serving in the Army's Infantry. He served in the Republic of Vietnam with the 173rd Airborne Brigade and assignments with the 82nd Airborne Division, Drill Sergeant, Fort Jackson, SC, First Sergeant in the 3-60th Infantry (Berlin Brigade), and multiple assignments as Command Sergeant Major. He finished his Army career as the Command Sergeant Major of the 3rd Brigade, 9th Infantry Division at Fort Lewis, retiring in 1990.

After completing his military service,

Lee entered the public sector, joining WDVA as an administrative assistant. In 1994 he was appointed as the agency deputy director and has served with the Washington State Department of Veterans Affairs for a total of 15 years.

He holds three degrees, including a Masters on Health Administration. He has served on the Army Chief of Staff Retiree Council, he is the co-chairman for the Fort Lewis Retiree Council, and is a proud member of the Veterans of Foreign Wars, the American Legion, Vietnam Veterans of America, Military Order of the Purple Heart, Disabled American Veterans, and the Association of the United States Army.

Alvarado has been with WDVA since 1993, and has served as the agency assistant director for the past three years.

Alvarado served 22 years on active duty retiring in August 1993 as the Command Sergeant Major of Madigan Army Medical Center in Fort Lewis, Washington.

Her experience and education center in the management of medical service delivery and human resources. She holds a Masters Degree in Health Care Administration. She is a graduate of the Harvard University John F. Kennedy School of Government Executive Program, the University of Washington Executive Management Program, and holds a Nursing Home Administrator's license, having previously managed two state veterans' homes in Washington State. In October 2004, she became the first woman president of the National Association of State Veterans Homes leading nation-wide initiatives and positive change for veterans' homes across the nation.



What's Inside...

WDVA New Leadership Appointments	Page 1
Director's Message	Page 2
Armed Forces License Plates go on sale	Page 3
"Younger" Vets Redefining Volunteerism	Page 4
VLC Gearing up/VAAC Highlights	Page 5
Citizens Recognized for service to Veterans	Page 6
WA Veterans Homes Highlights	Page 8
National Notes	Page 10
State Legislation Update	Page 11
Hats Off	Page 12

Washington State
Dept of Veterans Affairs
PO Box 41150
1011 Plum St, 2nd Floor
Olympia, WA 98504-1150

PRSR STD
U.S. POSTAGE PAID
Washington State
Department of Printing

Veteran Voices

Veteran Voices is published for Washington state veterans and their family members, WDVA employees and Veterans Home residents.

Volume 6, Issue 4
WINTER 2005

Governor
Christine Gregoire

WDVA Director
John E. Lee

Public Relations & Legislative Manager
Heidi Audette

Public Information Officer 2
Colleen Gilbert

Graphic Design
Miriam Young

Call 1-877-VETS-R-US
(877-838-7787) for an application to the veterans homes.



Publication Information

Please submit comments, articles and address changes electronically to:
colleen@dva.wa.gov
(360) 725-2180 or
miriam@dva.wa.gov
(360) 725-2169

or mail to:
Veteran Voices
PO Box 41150 Olympia,
WA 98504.

Articles must be received by the 1st of March, June, Sept., and Dec., for consideration in the next issue.

Publication of articles is at the discretion of the **Veteran Voices** editorial board.

When credit is given to the source, articles from the **Veteran Voices** may be reprinted.

To obtain this publication in an alternative format call (360) 725-2169.

Director's Message



John E. Lee
WDVA Director

I am very proud and excited to work for an agency that celebrates Veterans each and every day, throughout the year. I'd like to take a moment to share with you my Vision and direction for WDVA over the next few years. The basic premise is as follows:

We **Trust** our military to protect our freedoms.

Our military veterans and their families can **Trust** their Washington State Department of Veterans Affairs to:

- ★ **Serve** as their advocate for all VA entitlements;
- ★ Help **Heal** their seen and unseen wounds of war;
- ★ Give **Help** to the homeless;
- ★ Provide quality **Care** in our Veterans Homes; and
- ★ **Honor** veterans in their final resting place.

Our **Commitment** is to always be worthy of that trust.

It is our collective action that bring the premises of this Vision statement to life, for example:

Every day, benefits specialists, contract service officers and volunteer service officers, serve as advocates for veterans - helping them access their federal veterans benefits - linking them to the health care, compensation and education benefits they earned by their service and sacrifice.

Every day, mental health counselors across our great state provide veterans and their families with a way to begin healing those unseen, but equally painful, wounds of war.

Every day, our staff members offer help to our brothers and sisters who have fallen into the unforgiving cycle of homelessness. They find them in shelters, on city streets, and sometimes, in county jails, and do their best to show these veterans a better path.

Every day, we serve veterans in our wonderful Veterans Homes, striving to provide compassionate care and never losing sight of the fact that we work in their home.

And, every day, we mourn the passing of our brothers and sisters across the state, while making every effort to ensure they are properly honored in their final resting place.

For our newest veterans, we're partnering with federal, state and

local organizations to welcome them home and helping them to transition back into their roles as Mom and Dad, co-worker, student and neighbor. Having learned from past mistakes, our hope is that by reaching out to these soldiers and their families early, we are creating the opportunity to make their transition home a positive one.

I hope you will share in my enthusiasm for treating every day as Veteran's Day! My commitment to you, is to work hard to earn your trust and the trust of our veterans community.

Family Policy Council

- High use of energy and resources while on a mission
 - Exhaustion and withdrawal when the mission is done
- ### Decision Making

- Chain of command determines who makes decisions
- Little questioning or discussion
- Deciding and acting without hesitation

Response Tactics

- Act first, think later, and be ready to respond with force when necessary
- Avoid planning, be ready to react
- Be prepared and have things in place

Predictability and Intelligence

- Be unpredictable, vary routes and behaviors
- Do not let others know what you are thinking
- Avoid talking or giving out information that could be used against you

Emotional Control

- Control emotions to enhance performance
- Numb emotions, others may see them as weakness
- Have anger readily available to respond with

Talking About The War

- People will ask you stupid questions, prepare your answers well
- It may be very difficult to talk to people who were not there
- People may not want to hear about the details, don't be surprised
- Learning who to talk to and when is important

The Family Policy Council has published a booklet for anyone interested to learning more about the network of community needed to assist returning veterans and their families. Entitled "Welcome Home! How to Make a Difference in the Lives of Returning War Zone Veterans", it can be found on their



Participating in the Symposium are (L to R) Alfie Alvarado, WDVA Deputy Director; Krista Goldstine-Cole, Family Policy Council Education Consultant; First Gentleman Mike Gregoire; and Family Policy Council Director Laura Porter.

website at www.fpc.wa.gov or call 360-902-7880 to request a copy.

In addition, the Washington State Department of Veterans Affairs is standing ready to assist and can be reached at 1-800-562-2308 or learn more at www.dva.wa.gov and click on Enduring Freedom/Iraqi Freedom. www.dva.wa.gov/Iraqi%20Freedom%20Page.htm

Armed Forces License Plates Go on Sale

Beginning January 3, 2006, the Washington Department of Licensing will issue license plates with six separate designs, each containing a symbol representing a different branch of the armed forces to include Army, Marine Corps, Navy, Air Force, Coast Guard, and WA National Guard.

The recipients of the first 25 plates from each branch of service will receive their new license plates at a special ceremony to be held at the Capitol on Jan. 3. Interested veterans submitted their names throughout the last three months to the Washington State Department of Veterans Affairs (WDVA), and the winners were chosen in a drawing held by a subcommittee of the Governor's Veterans Affairs Advisory Committee and the Veterans Legislative Coalition. The first 25 names identified for each service were notified and given the opportunity to purchase the new plates.

Purchasers will also receive a decal indicating their military status, to include:

- ♦ veteran
- ♦ disabled veteran
- ♦ reservist
- ♦ retiree
- ♦ active duty

The special license plates may be used in place of regular or personalized license plates for motor vehicles or motorcycles required to display one or two motor vehicle license plates.

"The Washington State Department of Veterans Affairs is excited about the opportunity for our State's citizens to recognize and say 'Thank You' to the thousands of veterans and military personnel who have sacrificed so much for our freedoms," said John Lee, WDVA Director.

Although the plates are not available for purchase before January 3, WDVA has posted a "gift certificate" on their website at www.dva.wa.gov that family and friends can present to veterans during the holidays. Or, call 1-800-562-0132 to request a certificate by mail.

"Because the plates are available only to veterans, Guard, Reserves and active duty military, this will be a wonderful way to provide the plates as a gift," said Lee.

In addition to other state and county registration charges, the plates will cost \$40 for the initial purchase and \$30 for each yearly renewal. \$28 from the purchase and renewal of each plate will be directed to the Veterans Stewardship Account and is tax deductible.

The Veterans Stewardship Account will be used for activities that benefit veterans, such as maintaining a future state veteran's cemetery in eastern Washington; providing programs and services for homeless veterans; and establishing memorials honoring veterans.



Frequently Asked Questions

When will the Armed Forces special license plate go on sale?

The new plate may be purchased at all vehicle licensing office locations at the opening of business on Tuesday, January 3, 2006. Please visit <https://wws2.wa.gov/dol/vsagents/> to locate your local vehicle licensing office.

Can I purchase an Armed Forces license plate for all of my vehicles?

Yes. DOL will issue plate(s) to any vehicle registered in your name. Plates are available for registered passenger vehicles, light duty pickups, trailers, motorcycles and campers.

Will the Armed Forces plate(s) be given out upon initial purchase?

No. Plate(s) will be mailed from the Olympia Headquarters Licensing Office within two business days of your application being processed in your local vehicle licensing office.

How much do the new Armed Forces plates cost?

The original cost to purchase a Armed Forces plate(s) is \$40.00 plus any applicable licensing fees. When the vehicle registration becomes due, you will need to pay an additional \$30.00 to keep the Armed Forces plate(s) on your vehicle even if you have not had the plate(s) for a full year. The Department of Licensing highly recommends that you renew your vehicle registration at the same time you purchase your new special license plate or wait to purchase the plates when your registration is due. To determine the total cost due, contact your local vehicle licensing office. To locate your local

vehicle licensing office visit <https://wws2.wa.gov/dol/vsagents/>.

When will I know what Armed Forces plate number I will be issued?

Once you have paid for your new plate, a new registration will be printed that will identify your new license plate number. Plate numbers are assigned sequentially and automatically by the Department of Licensing computer system. No vehicle licensing agent can override the Department of Licensing's computer system to give a specific number.

Can I personalize my Armed Forces special license plate?

No. Currently, the law does not permit the Department of Licensing to personalize a special license plate. However, beginning March 1, 2007, you will be allowed to personalize this special license plate.

Will plates be issued numerically in the order in which they are applied for?

Yes. The plates will be issued in numerical order by the main Department of Licensing computer system. However, the first 25 plates will be pre-assigned by the Washington Department of Veterans Affairs in conjunction with the Governor's Veterans Affairs Advisory Committee and Veterans Legislative Committee.

Do I need anything special to purchase this plate?

You must provide your Washington State Driver's License or Identification card with your current vehicle registration. You may also be required to complete an Address Verification form, if the department has not previously verified your current vehicle record address.

In addition, you will need to either provide proof of service (military ID card, DD214, etc.) or

sign an affidavit verifying your military service/veteran status.

Can I purchase a new plate even if my vehicle is not due to be renewed until months after the plate becomes available?

Yes. You can purchase a new plate at any point during your registration period. However, the Department of Licensing highly recommends that you renew your vehicle registration at the same time you purchase your new special license plate or wait to purchase the plates when your registration is due. Otherwise, your initial special plate fee will be valid for less than one year.

Can I buy an Armed Forces plate as a gift for someone else?

No, not unless you and the recipient are both registered owners of the vehicle that will bear these plates.

What happens to the special plates when I sell my vehicle?

The special plates are issued to the individual and are not transferable to another person. If you sell your vehicle and purchase a new vehicle, you may pay a transfer fee and transfer the plates to your new vehicle. In you choose not to keep your Armed Forces plates, you may leave them on the vehicle and the new vehicle owner will take possession of those plates with the purchase of the vehicle.

If I purchase Armed Forces plates, how are the special plate fees used?

After the state has been reimbursed for the cost to implement this new special plate, \$28.00 of the initial and annual plate renewal fee will benefit the Veterans programs identified in law.

“Younger” Vets Redefining Volunteerism

Time and circumstance appear to be changing attitudes

With their children grown, and pension and healthcare concerns now a reality they must deal with, increasing numbers of Vietnam veterans are joining the ranks of community service volunteers.

Community service is not really new to many of that era, according to John Wheeler, a 1966 West Point graduate, Vietnam veteran and chairman of the National Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund.

But, when Wheeler was asked by President Reagan to explore ways to help Vietnam veterans with housing and jobs, he had trouble finding examples of successful veterans of that era because they didn't list it on their resumes for fear their military service would have a negative effect on their careers.

“We have a desire to give to our country that was as intense as our dads” said Wheeler in a story published by USA Today. “It just got delayed by about four decades. You see it emerging now.”

Approximately one-third of the membership of the American Legion, the Veterans of Foreign Wars and the Disabled American Veterans are Vietnam veterans. Almost all those filling the top leadership posts in all three organizations – both nationally and in Washington State – come from the Vietnam era.



Vietnam Traveling Wall bringing generations together

For two weeks in November, The American Veterans Traveling Tribute drew crowds of all ages while on display in Auburn and Rochester.

Veterans from WWII and Korea, both with their numbers dwindling, seemed to take solace in being a part of the groups that came and went, 24 hours a day, to visit, pay tribute and remember.

Vietnam Veterans were “Welcomed Home” by fellow veterans of that war.

Veterans from the Gulf War, Iraq and Afghanistan seemed to feel a sense of belonging, part of a special bond that drew them together with the combat veterans of the last 60 years.

School kids, cub scouts and young people watched as all veterans joined together to retire the colors and listened to the memories – a history lesson of freedom.

And not an eye was dry, as a young Marine, back from Iraq only a month, apologized to the veterans of Vietnam for the treatment they had received, and then quietly spoke of the bond formed between them by their combat service. The unspoken need of this very important bond could be heard in his voice as he said, “Welcome Home, Brothers.”



Combat Veterans Motorcycle Association Share Thanksgiving with Fellow Veterans



Our association members were glad when Thanksgiving Day finally arrived. The excitement derived from an earlier meeting to coordinate special arrangements with the Washington Veterans Home in the city of Retsil, near Port Orchard, Washington. We planned out a surprise visit by many of our members to serve dinner to the military veteran residents.

Normally, Thanksgiving is a traditional family day to chow down on

the big bird, share with relatives, and hangout with close friends. On this day, a few of us chose to spend some quality time with our fellow Veterans.

Upon our arrival at the Veterans Home, we were met by our POC. The center is very large, so they split us up into four groups in order to visit all the cafeterias at the same time. We had a chance to talk with the residents before dinner. After a great visit, we served them their Thanksgiving dinner and drinks. Those that could not make it to a cafeteria were served by the staff in their rooms. The residents really enjoyed our visit, especially having us as servers.

I want to thank all my brothers for freely giving of their holiday time off to support this ride and to the staff of the Washington Veterans Home for their extra effort to help our fellow veterans under their care have a happier Thanksgiving meal and day! Also, we



would like to give a special salute to all our veteran brothers and sisters in homes, centers and hospitals across our great country. We are already discussing the idea to make this an annual event for our association! "Veterans Helping Veterans"

I will never forget that I am an American fighting for freedom, responsible for my action, and dedicated to the principles which made my country free. I will trust in my God and in the United States of America.

John "Wings" Towers
CVMA, Washington

Combat Veterans Motorcycle Association (CVMA) is a national organization. More information about them can be found on their web site www.combatvet.org.

Family Activity Days for Guard and Reserves Netting Results

Between March and November 2005, a coordinated plan of outreach to National Guard and Reserve by Washington Partners in Readiness (Signatories of the Memorandum of Understanding signed in the Fall of 2004) brought about the following results:

- 2,055 service members were provided services
- 360 VA claims were files
- 856 Readjustment referrals were made
- 449 Received employment assistance
- 1,061 Enrolled in VA Health care
- 1,862 Briefed on Tri-Care Reserve Select

The success of the events required the services of more than 300 state and federal volunteers, working together with WDVA.

"All involved should take pride in a job well done," said WDVA director John Lee.

"However, the journey is just begun. Statistics from the Defense Manpower Data Center and our DD Form 214 database indicate that 11,046 Reserve Component Service Members (and 15,677 family members) have been activated from Washington State for service in the Global War on Terror.

"It is incumbent upon us to continue our outreach until each of them receives the services they need and deserve."

VLC Gears Up for 2006 Legislative Session

With the 2006 Legislative Session set to begin on January 9, 2006, the Veterans Legislative Coalition (VLC) stands ready to provide information and to testify on a number of veteran issues that may become bills during the session.

Over the summer, the VLC explored a number of issues such as:

- ♦ Primary Date – making changes to the date to ensure military serving overseas have the time and the opportunity to vote;
- ♦ Property Tax Relief for 100% Disabled Veterans – changing the current law so service connected disability compensation is not counted as income when determining eligibility for property tax exemptions;
- ♦ Definition of Veteran – consolidating two state laws that currently define veteran for certain state benefits;
- ♦ State Parks Passes – giving Washington State Parks & Recreation the authority to revoke a parks pass if a pass-holder abuses the program (for example if a pass-holder assaults a Parks Officer or reserves multiple campsites for non pass-holders).
- ♦ Payday Lending – protecting military personnel and their families from aggressive payday lenders.

The VLC is a non-profit organization made up of representatives from Veterans Service Organizations throughout the state. Their primary mission is to monitor and influence legislation at the state level that directly affects veterans. During the legislative session, VLC members meet every Friday in Olympia.

The VLC Executive Committee is made up of:

Chair	Jim Monk
Vice-Chair	Dennis Primoli
Treasurer	Jack Green
Secretary	Frosty Hulsey
Legislative Secretary	Larry Walker
Past Chair	Dan Gogerty

For more information, or to get involved with the VLC, contact Jim Monk at (360) 352-9599.

Governor's Veterans Affairs Advisory Committee



2005-2006 Chairman – Bill Schrier

Established and regulated by RCW 43.60A.080, The Governor's Veterans Affairs Advisory

Committee (VAAC) meets six times each year, in different locations throughout the state.

The two primary responsibilities of the VAAC are:

- ♦ To serve in an advisory capacity to the governor and the director on matters pertaining to the department of veterans affairs, and

- ♦ To acquaint themselves fully with the operations of the Washington State Department of Veterans Affairs and recommend such changes to the governor and the director as they deem advisable.

The bi-monthly meetings are public and all interested citizens of Washington are invited – and encouraged – to attend.

For additional information on the VAAC, meeting times and locations, or other veterans issues, visit the WDVA website at www.dva.wa.gov or contact VAAC chairman Bill Schrier at bkschrier@comcast.net

Phone: (360) 856-5161 (H)
(360) 391-2263 (Cell)
(360) 856-5161(Fax)

2006 VAAC Meeting Schedule

Meeting times, locations and directions posted at www.dva.wa.gov/Events	
Jan 19, 2006	Sedro Wooley Am Legion Post 43
March 16, 2006	Retsil
May 18, 2006	Olympia
July 13, 2006	Yakima
Sept 14, 2006	Spokane

Highlights of Nov. 17, 2005, VAAC meeting held in Vancouver, WA:

(Complete minutes are available at www.dva.wa.gov/VAAC-VLC)

- ♦ Washington State Parks and Recreations provided information about a proposed bill for next session that could deny or revoke park pass privileges if pass holders violate certain rules.

- ♦ A representative from the U.S. Navy provided information about a proposed bill for next session that could make payday lenders off-limits to military personnel.

- ♦ Armed Forces License Plates go on sale January 3, 2006. (See additional information on page 3 of this publication or go to www.dva.wa.gov/specialty_military_license_plate.asp)

- ♦ 2005 Outstanding Service to Veterans presented at Auburn Veterans Day Parade (See full story on recipients, page 6 of this publication)

- ♦ Veterans Emblem Fund grants were announced (See story on page 7 of this publication).

Newest VAAC Member Appointed

Governor Christine Gregoire has appointed Col. Deryl S. McCarty, USAF (ret) to serve on the Governor's Veterans Affairs Advisory Committee.



McCarty is a Vietnam and Desert Storm veteran, serving from 1967 to 1998 in aircraft maintenance and logistics, and became owner-partner in Creative Computer Sales, Inc. after his retirement from military service.

In addition to his new appointment to the VAAC, McCarty serves as president of the Argus Manor Board – an apartment complex for low-income seniors – and as vice-president and board member of the South Hill Community Council.

McCarty also serves as secretary / vice-president of the Mt. Rainier Chapter of MOAA and his term on the VAAC will run from Nov. 28, 2005 to July 1, 2009.

Citizens Recognized for Service to Veterans

Several Washington residents have received Outstanding Service to Veterans Awards for their contributions to Washington states veterans and their families during the last year.

The awards - co-sponsored each year by the Governor's Veterans Affairs Advisory Committee (VAAC) and the state Department of Veterans Affairs - recognize individuals who devote time and energy to improving the lives of Washington's veteran community.

Outstanding Veteran Volunteer for Service to Veterans went to **Gary Pearson**, a veteran of the United States Coast Guard and son of an Air Force MP.

Pearson is a member of The Paralyzed Veterans of America and has served for six terms as president of the Northwest Chapter of Paralyzed Veterans of America (NWPVA). Under his leadership, NWPVA has been a leading force on veteran issues and issues concerning disability, both with the Washington State Legislature and on a National level.

In addition to spending countless hours at the Seattle Spinal Cord Injury Unit, Pearson supervises NWPVA's efforts to improve transportation for people with disabilities to ensure access to buses, trains, airplanes, ferries and cruise ships, raising the quality of life for people with disabilities.



Outstanding Volunteer Service Officer for Service to Veterans was awarded to **Frosty Hulsey**, a past commander of the VFW State Dept. of Washington.

Hulsey has provided years of service to veterans as a Service Officer for the VFW, and spends a minimum of three days each week at the VFW Headquarters in Fife as a volunteer Service Officer and counselor. He has volunteered as the primary outreach Service Officer for the VFW by attending most of the National Guard/Reserve

"Family Activity Days", where he assists and counsels soldiers returning from Iraq. He has provided the same services to the US Marine Corps reserve units at Fort Lewis.

Hulsey was recently asked to assume the role of counselor and Service Officer to all DSHS veterans/applicants by the state of Washington.



Mrs. Hulsey accepted Frosty's award on his behalf.

Cathleen Hennie was chosen as this year's **Outstanding Service Officer** for Service to Veterans.

Hennie served in the US Army from 1974 - 1994, in Korea, Germany and Saudi Arabia and during Desert Storm.

Five and a half years ago, she became a volunteer at the American Lake VA Hospital and within six months was hired as the American Legion Service Officer.

As an injured veteran of the first Gulf War, she understands and fights for the veterans she helps, and has a working knowledge of the VA system and what it takes to help veterans navigate the channels. For the past eight years, in addition to her duties at American Lake, she has served as the post Service Officer for the American Legion in the Yelm, Roy and Rainier area and has worked tirelessly to support the post's Veterans Assistance Fund, the USO and Fisher House at the SeattleVA.



Jim Rising has been awarded **Outstanding Employee** for Service to Veterans.

Rising has been with WDVA since 1983. He is a classic example what a public servant should be. He is a thoroughly dedicated public servant and because of his unselfish efforts, many veterans now in our state are getting services they deserved. He is a very resourceful and caring leader. His greatest attribute to the agency is finding outside resources to lessen general fund state money and continue excellent service to the public. Because of his effort and strong leadership, he energizes his subordinates and co-workers interest in veterans issues.



Outstanding Female Non-Veteran for Service to Veterans was awarded to **Ruth Hammer**.

For more than 33 years, Hammer has been a regularly scheduled volunteer at the Walla Walla VAMC. During this time, she has logged over 17,000 volunteer hours. In addition, she has logged over 200,000 miles driving the DAV van, providing veterans in the Tri-Cities area a way to get to the Walla Walla VAMC for assistance.

As a member of DAV Aux. 46, she has held every office in the Chapter, State and 19th National District, and still found time for fundraising, delivering comfort kits, running monthly Bingo and working tirelessly at the clothing room at Walla Walla. In her spare time, Ruth is a volunteer at the Richland CBOC, fundraises for local heart, diabetes and cancer drives; supports the Shriners Hospital in Spokane, and is a member of the Order of the Eastern Star, White Shrine of Jerusalem, and Daughters of the Nile.

The honorees were presented during the annual Veterans Day Parade in Auburn on Nov. 5, and honored at a luncheon later that day.

Nomination forms for next year's awards can be obtained from the Washington State Department of Veterans Affairs by calling (360) 725-2167 or on-line at www.dva.wa.gov.



NAAV ANNOUNCEMENT

The National Association of Atomic Veterans, Inc.(NAAV) has announced Washington State now has a state commander, Pete Besas.

Besas can be reached at 360-371-5322 or PHbesas@aol.com

NAAV is a nonprofit veterans service corporation dedicated to assisting an estimated one million U. S. veterans, from all service branches, who were first hand participants in atomic weapons test detonations, from July 16, 1945 to Nov. 23, 1992.

\$21,500 Awarded by Veterans Affairs Advisory Committee to State Memorials

Seven projects paying tribute to living and deceased veterans in Washington State have received funding from the Veterans Remembrance Emblem Fund administered by The Governor's Veterans Affairs Advisory Committee (VAAC).

The following groups were approved for funding, which totaled \$21,500:

- American Legion Post 133 in Wapato - \$1,000 to be used for the design and cost development of a Greater Wapato area Veterans Memorial
- NW Chapter Paralyzed Veterans of America - \$4,500 for phase II of repairing the Veterans Chimes Tower at Evergreen Washelli Veterans Cemetery in Seattle;
- Kitsap County Council for Human Rights - \$2,000 to help with maintenance of the Kitsap County Veterans Memorial dedicated in Silverdale.
- Benaroya Hall - \$2,000 to assist with annual addition of names to the Garden of Remembrance in Seattle
- Squaxin Veterans Memorial Committee - \$5,000 to cover a portion of the energy efficient lighting system that is a part of the

new memorial.

- 1st Special Forces Group - \$2,000 to complete the landscaping and sod at the group's Memorial Wall on Ft. Lewis.
- City of Rainier - \$5,000 to assist with phase I of the Rainier Veterans Memorial Park

The Emblem Fund permits eligible veterans to purchase and display approved decals on their vehicle license plates through the Department of Licensing, with net fees being deposited in a special account held by the state treasurer.

RCW 46.16.332 allows disbursement of these funds by the VAAC, for direct costs of contracting, contract administration and project administration related to: projects that pay tribute to living and deceased veterans; upkeep and operations of existing memorials and; land acquisition and construction of new memorials.

The VAAC - under the leadership of Chair Bill Schrier - is composed of 17 members and advises the governor and the director of the Department of Veterans Affairs on issues and programs concerning veterans.

Oral History Project Seeking Women Involved in WWII

Women who served during World War II – both home and abroad – are being asked to come forward to tell their stories as part of Washington State's World War II History Project.

The interviews will become part of the 165 interviews that were done in recent years to preserve the history of Washington State's World War II generation and incorporated into the development of a curriculum for the use in public schools. In addition to the audio and videotapes, the initial project produced the award-winning two-hour video "When We Were Kids We Went To War". <http://www.wwiihistoryclass.com/>

Women interested in being interviewed for this project can send an e-mail with contact information and a brief description of their role during WWII to:

history@bristolproductions.com
or by regular mail to:
WWII Women's History Project
c/o Bristol Productions
4540 Gifford Rd SW
Olympia WA 98512

The project calls for approximately 45 women to be interviewed, with the time and place for the interviews to be set-up based on response from the public.

France to Issue 100 Legion of Honor Medals to U.S. WWII Veterans

U.S. veterans who participated in the liberation of France during World War II could be eligible to receive the French Legion of Honor Medal, France's highest decoration.

To apply for consideration for the medal, a veteran must submit written documentation, which is normally a copy of his/her military separation order, DD - 214, and other official orders which verifies their military history during combat, to:

French Consulate
Attn: Mr. Ludovic David
540 Bush Street
San Francisco, CA 98408

Members of the Army, Army Air Corps, Navy and Coast Guard who participated in one of the four major campaigns in the liberation of France (Normandy, Southern France, Northern France and the Ardennes) are eligible for this French award.

Any previous military awards such as the Congressional Medal of Honor, the Silver Star, the Bronze Star, the Purple Heart, etc., would indicate meritorious actions during combat operations.

The Legion of Honor Committee in Paris, France, will review all applications, and approximately 100 French Legion of Honor Medals will be awarded each year in the U.S. at the home of each veteran or at public ceremony during a patriotic holiday. These arrangements will be made after the awardees have been notified.

Honor Washington State Veterans by Making a Donation

A perfect way to pay tribute to those who served in the military and have a positive impact on the lives of our state's veterans is to make a tax-deductible donation to any of the following:

- ★ Resident Betterment Fund – Enhances lives of residents at our state veterans homes
- ★ Veterans Stewardship Fund – Will be used to provide programs and services for homeless veterans, maintenance of the proposed Eastern Washington Veterans Cemetery
- ★ Washington State WWII Memorial Maintenance Fund
- ★ Washington State Korean War Veterans Memorial Maintenance Fund

★ Washington State Vietnam Veterans Memorial

Donations can be made in honor or memory of a veteran, and 100 % of your donation goes to the designated fund. PLEASE INDICATE WHICH FUND TO APPLY YOUR DONATION TO.

Send to: WDVA
_____ Fund
PO Box 41150
Olympia WA 98504-1150

For additional information contact WDVA Public Affairs at 360-725-2180 or 2169.

Washington Veterans Home Highlights

State Veterans Homes say Thank You!

The Washington Soldiers Home celebrated Veteran's Day by inviting veterans and community members to attend a traditional Veteran's Day Ceremony. U.S. Senator Patty Murray provided remarks and restated her commitment to veterans issues. "American veterans laid the foundation for our country,"



Murray said. "Our veterans have risked their lives to defend our way of life."

Murray said it is time to ask if we have done enough to honor our veterans.

State Senator Marilyn Rasmussen and State Representative Jim McCune, who serve on the state Veterans' and Military Affairs Committee, also attended and expressed their support for the Soldiers Home and its many residents.

The program was held in Chilson Hall, which was nearly filled to capacity with Soldiers Home residents, families, veterans, active duty men and women, and community members – including local volunteers and youth organizations. Superintendent David DeVore welcomed the many guests and offered his appreciation for their service. The

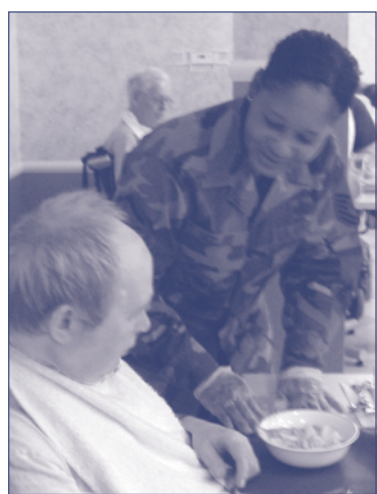
Graham-Kapowsin JROTC Color Guard presented the colors and the Governor's Proclamation was presented by Resident Council Chair William Donald.

Master Sgt. Marvin Shield of the Washington Air National Guard provided a keynote address. WDVA Director John Lee also spoke. The Puyallup Community Band played a selection of patriotic favorites including America the Beautiful and the Armed Forces Medley.

"The Washington Soldiers Home is grateful for the participation of so many volunteers and community members who helped make this program possible!" said Superintendent DeVore.

The Bremerton High School Jr. ROTC posted the Colors opening the Washington Veterans Home program. The audience joined in singing the National Anthem. Superintendent Jon Clontz welcomed everyone and then read the Governor's Veterans Day Proclamation.

The musical portion of the program was performed by the Port Orchard Independents who sang several patriotic songs. Newly appointed WDVA Director John Lee presented the audience of residents, family members and Home staff, with his new vision for the agency.



The Finch Elementary 3rd and 4th graders entertained the residents of the Spokane Home with patriotic songs, poems and stories for Veterans Day.

Local VFW Auxiliary presented gifts to the Veterans, a coffee mug, candy and a calling card.

Spokane's Veterans Day program was held in the remodeled dining room. Kaye Conrath, Marketing Director was Mistress of Ceremonies. The Colors were presented by the 141st Air Refueling Wing, ANG560th ANG. A Brass Quintet played the National Anthem, America the Beautiful and America Patrol.

John Custer, Director of the Spokane area Honor Guard led the Pledge of Allegiance and read the Governor's Proclamation. The guest speaker was Fred Aronow, Retired Army Reserve Colonel.

U.S. Representative Cathy McMorris visited Veterans Day Morning. She toured the new kitchen and visited with some of the Veterans.

Several active duty personnel assisted with cooking and serving the BBQ lunch.

Later in the week, another music group, Wild Blue Country - US Air Force Academy Band came by to entertain the residents.

Medical Director hired at Retsil



Dr. Karen Anderson

Washington Veterans Home is proud to welcome Dr. Karen Anderson to serve as Medical Director and primary physician for the facility. Dr. Anderson attended the University of Washington where she received her medical degree. She also received her Masters in Public Health from the University of Washington School of Public Health and Community Medicine.

Throughout her medical career of almost 30 years, Dr. Anderson has worked in general and preventive medicine, adult primary care, alcohol rehabilitation and in pediatrics. She has worked as a physician at the Washington Corrections Center for Women and at Fircrest Residential Habilitation Center for the developmentally disabled.

Most recently, Dr. Anderson worked as the Associate Medical Director for QSource in Memphis TN. Their focus is to reduce or eliminate healthcare disparities for underserved populations.

Program Targeted to Assist Homeless Women Who Served in the U.S. Military

The Washington State Department of Veterans Affairs in Olympia administers a program specifically targeted to women veterans who are homeless, employable and needing assistance with employment related issues.

If you know of a woman veteran needing assistance, please call Barbara Logan, Veterans Benefits Specialist with WDVA, at 1-800-562-2308 or barb@dva.wa.gov

Funding for the program is issued competitively by the U.S. Department of Labor under their Homeless Veterans' Reintegration Program (HVRP), the first nationwide grant program focused on placing homeless veterans into jobs, with only 85 grants awarded for 2005-2006.

Superior Service Recognized by Veterans Families

The family of a Spokane Veterans Home resident writes:

Dear Ms. Magonigle:

We would like to thank the many people who worked with Gary beginning August 29, 2005. Every person that we met during the time he was at the Spokane Veterans Home was compassionate, positive and extremely helpful. Each individual went out of their way to see that our needs were met, over and above any expectations we had. From the moment we entered this facility, it felt like a "family." Though Gary died in September, the Spokane Veterans Home would have been an ideal place for him to live.

We feel blessed that Gary was treated with dignity, appropriate humor and encouragement and received the medical attention he needed in spite of his financial situation. The Spokane Veterans Home is fortunate to have so many individuals who care deeply about the residents and their families. The fond memories we have of Gary will continue to sustain us. Likewise, the friendships formed with employees of the Spokane Veterans Home will carry with us the rest of our lives.

A family member of a Retsil resident recently wrote:

In the middle of several challenges our family has been dealing with, my Uncle passed away at Harrison Hospital in Bremerton. He and I pretty much grew up together in California and were like Brothers. We were only four years apart. He was one of my dearest friends.

My Uncle was a long time resident at Retsil. He moved from independent living to assisted nursing care during his tenure there. It was sad to see his health declining over the years. Suffering from diabetes and heart congestion, he eventually lost his lower left leg. I could go on ...

Mr. Clontz, I want you to know that my uncle was very happy at Retsil. He considered the staff to be very much a part of his family. Although we visited often, he would get lonely for us. Your staff did much to lessen that loneliness.

My family and I would like to commend you for your leadership and your staff for their professionalism and kindness.

New Veterans Community Service Coordinator in Spokane Area

Don Gillespie is a native of Spokane. He spent the last 10 years as a member of Congressman Nethercutt's Spokane District Staff. Don worked closely with the veterans of the 5th district on a wide range of issues, including the Spokane Veterans Home project along with WDVA.

Gillespie is working on the Veterans Cemetery project in Eastern Washington as well as, the Eastern Washington marketing of the Armed Forces license plate program. Don has been busy since he started with WDVA in July. A Public Service Announcement promoting the Armed Forces License Plates has been released, featuring Bryce Fisher of the Seattle Seahawks, who is also a member of the Air National Guard. Gillespie has also been working an awareness campaign through the Washington Auto Dealers Association, the Spokane Chiefs Hockey Club, and local credit unions.

According to Gillespie, the Eastern WA Cemetery project is moving along. The final report listing the top four proposed sites for the cemetery plans have been sent to WDVA Director John Lee. Next, the funding request will go to the Legislature and in the spring, acquisition of land will be done.

Veterans Helping Restore Washington's Rivers



Mark Fischer recently signed a half-time contract with WDVA to head the Veterans Conservation Corps, funded by a four-year bill that will connect veterans with salmon restoration projects around the state. According to Fischer, veterans have an option of doing a variety of tasks, including work replanting, or removing invasive species, being a docent to visitors along salmon walks, doing more scientific lab, or hatchery work, or science field work. These jobs would be part time and voluntary on the part of the veteran. For more information, contractors or veterans should telephone Mark Fischer at 360-586-1073 or contact him by Email at markf@dva.wa.gov.

Fischer stated that the emphasis in the Veterans Conservation Corps will be to hook up veterans who have been in treatment for Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) with Salmon Enhancement Groups, who will put the veteran to work in an area he or she might prefer. A recent opportunity for the Veterans Conservation Corps is a grant from the Ernest R. and Audrey M. Turner Foundation, Inc., (an organization committed to preventing damage to the natural systems - water, air, and land - on which all life depends) for a project in King County.

In partnership with the Stilly-Snohomish Fisheries Task Force, the grant will allow the volunteer veterans on the project to have their mileage and lunches paid for, as well as purchasing boots, gloves and other gear, which can then be used for other projects. Refer to the web site www.dva.wa.gov/veterans_conservation_corps.htm for volunteer opportunities and statewide locations.

Mark Fischer earned his MS in Behavior Science/ Marriage/ Family/ Child Counseling at LaVerne College, in California. He was a therapist in the WDVA PTSD Program for 14 years, based in Olympia. Mark also has a BS in biology and, after he left WDVA, he worked for the Puget Sound Restoration Fund managing a shell fish farm.



National Notes



VA's Online RX Refill Service the Right Prescription for Vets

Tens of thousands of veterans are now receiving their prescription drug refills from the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) with greater convenience, speed and security, thanks to a new service available to veterans over the Internet.

More than 70,000 prescriptions have been refilled using the latest service added to VA's "MyHealtheVet," the personal online health record system designed for veterans in the VA health care system. The prescription refill service began on Aug. 31.

The secure online prescription refill service has quickly emerged as one of the more popular features in the MyHealtheVet system, which connects with VA's widely respected electronic records system.

When a veteran orders a prescription refill, the request is routed to VA's computer system to be filled by one of the department's outpatient mail pharmacies. The refill is then sent directly to the veteran, eliminating the need for a trip to the pharmacy and a wait in line.

On Veterans Day, Nov. 11, 2005, MyHealtheVet marked its second anniversary by adding three new health records that veterans can keep in a secure electronic environment and make available to VA health professionals nationwide – blood oxygen levels taken from a pulse oximeter, daily food intake in the Food Journal, and physical activity and exercise in the Activity Journal.

By October, 2005, more than 100,000 veterans had signed up to use MyHealtheVet, which is located on VA's Web site at www.myhealth.va.gov.

Among the services available to veterans, their families and VA care providers through the online personal record are the ability to track health conditions – entering readings such as blood pressure and cholesterol levels – and to record medications, allergies, military health history, medical events and tests.

Veterans can also include personal information, such as emergency contacts, names of medical providers and health insurance information. They can access health information on the Internet from VA, MedlinePlus from the National Library of Medicine, and Healthwise, a commercial health education library.

Future expansion of MyHealtheVet will allow VA patients to view appointments and co-payment balances, access portions of their medical records, and give access to their records to doctors, family members and others.

Source: U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs News Release, November 23, 2005

No Across-the-Board Review of PTSD Cases

The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) will not review the files of 72,000 veterans currently receiving disability compensation for post-traumatic stress disorder, the Department's secretary announced today.

On May 19, 2005, VA's Inspector General reported on an examination of the files of a sample of 2,100 randomly selected veterans with disability ratings for post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). The IG cited insufficient documentation in the files and a dramatic increase in veterans filing for disability compensation for post-traumatic stress disorder since 1999.

"We have now just completed our own careful review of those 2,100 files cited in the IG's report," said the Honorable R. James Nicholson, Secretary of Veterans Affairs. "The problems with these files appear to be administrative in nature, such as missing documents, and not fraud."

"In the absence of evidence of fraud, we're not going to put our veterans through the anxiety of a widespread review of their disability claims," Nicholson said. "Instead, we're going to improve our training for VA personnel who handle disability claims and toughen administrative oversight."

"Not all combat wounds are caused by bullets and shrapnel," Nicholson added. "We have a commitment to ensure veterans with PTSD receive compassionate, world-class health care and appropriate disability compensation determinations."

Source: U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs News Release, November 10, 2005

VA Announces New Survivor Benefits Web Site

The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) has created a new Internet Web site for the surviving spouses and dependents of military personnel who died on active duty and for the survivors and dependents of veterans who died after leaving the military.

The Web site is organized into two broad categories – death in service and death after service. It provides visitors with information about a wide range of benefits for the surviving spouse, dependent children, and dependent parents of deceased veterans and active-duty personnel.

The site also has information from -- and links to -- other federal agencies and organizations that offer benefits and services to survivors and dependents.

The new website can be found at www.vba.va.gov/survivors or by clicking the "Survivors Benefits" button on the left panel of www.vba.va.gov.

Source: U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs News Release, September 13, 2005

VA, ABC Radio Networks Partner on Outreach to Veterans

Officials of the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) and ABC Radio Networks today announced a partnership designed to enhance VA's outreach to America's nearly 25 million veterans through a public service campaign, a special global broadcast saluting veterans and participation in key VA events.

Under the relationship, ABC Radio Networks and American Country Countdown with Bob Kingsley will air a series of public service announcements detailing benefits available to veterans.

In addition, on November 11, 2005, "Bob Kingsley Salutes America's Veterans" will be broadcast on the ABC Radio Networks. The program will feature interviews with and historical pieces narrated by some of country music's biggest names, including Faith Hill, Toby Keith, Trace Adkins, Brooks & Dunn and Trisha Yearwood, among many others. It also includes information on veterans' benefits, and interview segments with the Honorable R. James Nicholson, Secretary of Veterans Affairs.

The agreement announced today by Nicholson and ABC Radio representatives enables VA to work with private industry, in addition to its other outreach activities, to inform veterans of the entitlements they have earned as mandated by Congress.

As part of the campaign, VA has also created The Secretary's Award for Outstanding Service to American Veterans. The award will be presented in early 2006. Details will be announced in late 2005 or early 2006.

Audio of the press conference making the announcement is available at: <http://www.va.gov/opa/feature/radio.htm>

Source: U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs News Release, September 30, 2005

VA Secretary Announces “Fulfilling the Commitment” Initiative

The Secretary of Veterans Affairs (VA) announced a new initiative called Fulfilling the Commitment – Coming Home to Work today at a three-day conference put on by VA to help veterans make the transition from military service to civilian life.

Fulfilling the Commitment – Coming Home to Work is an umbrella initiative, a comprehensive intergovernmental and public-private alliance that will ensure separating Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF) and Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF) veterans that they will have employment opportunities when they return home from the war on terrorism.

This initiative focuses on linking OIF/OEF service members to existing resources through local and regional job markets, regardless of where they separate, where they return, or the career or education they pursue.

The Bureau of Labor Statistics reports that in the first three quarters of 2005, almost 15 percent of veterans in the 20-24 year-old age group were unemployed, nearly three times the national rate.

Some 200,000 service members separate from active military service annually. This initiative will combine the efforts of federal, state and private sector entities to address their employment needs.

VA is the nation's second-largest Cabinet department and one of the nation's largest employers of disabled veterans, with about 20,000 disabled employees among its work force of more than 237,000.

Source: U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs News Release, October 13, 2005

State Legislation

The 2006 Washington State Legislative Session will begin on January 9, 2006.

Information on veteran related bills and committee hearings will be updated regularly on the WDVA web page at www.dva.wa.gov under “Legislature/RCW/WAC”. You can also contact Heidi Audette at heidia@dva.wa.gov or (360) 725-2154 to ask questions or get additional information on legislation affecting veterans.

For a complete list of all legislation, you can visit the Washington State Legislature’s web page at www.leg.wa.gov.

VA Prescription Co-Pays to Increase by \$1

Co-payments for outpatient medicines prescribed through Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) medical facilities will rise by \$1, according to an announcement today by VA. The \$1 increase for a 30-day supply of prescription drugs will take effect on January 1, 2006, the first change in VA prescription drug co-payments in four years.

The increase to \$8 from \$7 for a 30-day supply of prescription drugs is required by federal law, which bases VA's co-payments for outpatient prescriptions on increases in the Medical Consumer Price Index.

The \$1 increase will not affect veterans who have an injury or illness connected with their military service resulting in a 50 percent or greater disability. Also known as “Priority Group 1” veterans, these patients will see no change in their current prescription drug benefit, Nicholson said.

Other veterans with less pronounced service-connected ailments – those classified as Priority Groups 2 through 6 – will see their prescription drug co-pays rise by \$1, but their annual out-of-pocket expenses for VA medicine will remain capped. The new cap will rise to \$960 per year, up \$120 from the previous level. This means veterans in Priority Groups 2 through 6 will pay no more than \$960 annually for VA outpatient medicine.

Veterans who have no injury or illness related in any way to their prior military service – referred to as Priority Groups 7 and 8 – will also see their co-payments increase, but there is no cap on annual payments for outpatient medicine.

Not all prescription drugs will be subject to the \$1 increase. Outpatient medications not subject to co-payments include:

- Medication for treatment of a service-connected disability;
- Medication for a veteran who has a service-connected disability of 50 percent or more;
- Medication for a veteran disabled by 50 percent or more for unemployability;
- Medication for a veteran whose annual income does not exceed the amount of VA pensions;
- Medications for health problems that may be linked to Agent Orange for Vietnam veterans, to radiation exposure, to undiagnosed illnesses of Persian War veterans, or for new veterans within two years of discharge after serving in a combat theater.

Source: U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs News Release, November 16, 2005

VA Commits New Funding for Increased Gulf War Veterans’ Illnesses Research

In an effort to further answer medical questions involving veterans who served in the Gulf War, the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) has approved funding for 12 new research projects to better understand illnesses affecting some Gulf War veterans.

The total cost of the research projects, all of which went through a rigorous medical peer review, is estimated to be \$5.2 million over three years, with \$1.7 million approved for Fiscal Year 2006. The new programs bring projected Gulf War veterans’ illnesses research spending for FY 2006 to \$11.3 million.

Funding for the projects is expected to begin in January 2006, and all research will be conducted at VA medical centers around the country.

Some veterans who participated in Operation Desert Shield and Operation Desert Storm have reported a variety of ailments including fatigue, weakness, sleep disturbances, persistent headaches, skin rashes, respiratory problems, and other illnesses at rates that significantly exceed those reported by other veteran groups.

These research projects focus on understanding and treating the illnesses affecting these veterans, as well as understanding the potential long-term health effects of Gulf War-related exposures.

The newest Gulf War veterans’ illnesses research programs will be organized and administered through VA medical centers located in Bedford, MA; Baltimore, MD; Washington, D.C.; Durham, NC; Miami, FL; Tampa, FL; Minneapolis, MN; Omaha, NE; Salt Lake City, UT; and San Francisco, CA.

Source: U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs News Release, November 15, 2005

Hats Off

Top Legionnaire of the Year - Ralph Martin of American Legion Rainier Post 264



According to Post Commander, Quent Keaveny, "Mr. Martin was singled out from among the 35,000 Legion members in Washington and truly stands out because of his dedication to helping veterans and the American Legion. He is completely devoted to the welfare of veterans, their families and assisting the community and personifies what the American Legion is all about."

Rainier's AL Post, started only four years ago, has 235 veteran members. The Post meets at the Rainier Chapel on the 4th Tuesday of the month at 7:30 P.M. For additional information, call 360-458-8433 or 360-446-3194.

TREA & Walmart Donate Fruit



Charles J. Tyler, Chapter President TREA-110 (left) went to Walmart and asked them to donate boxes of apples, oranges, grapes, and bananas to the Soldiers Home for

Thanksgiving. He plans to do this again for Christmas also. This is the second year that the TREA-110 has provided this wonderful donation. Food Manager Cornelius Bibb (seen assisting with the unloading process) said, "The fruit is very fresh and is just perfect for serving over the Thanksgiving holidays. We thank this organization for their interest in our veterans wellbeing. The Home truly appreciates their continued support."

American Legion Auxiliaries



It's that time of year again for Holiday shopping. The American Legion Auxiliary set up their annual Gift Shops at each of our State Veterans Homes, providing hundreds of gifts for residents to choose from. Then the gifts were all wrapped and mailed off to families and friends.

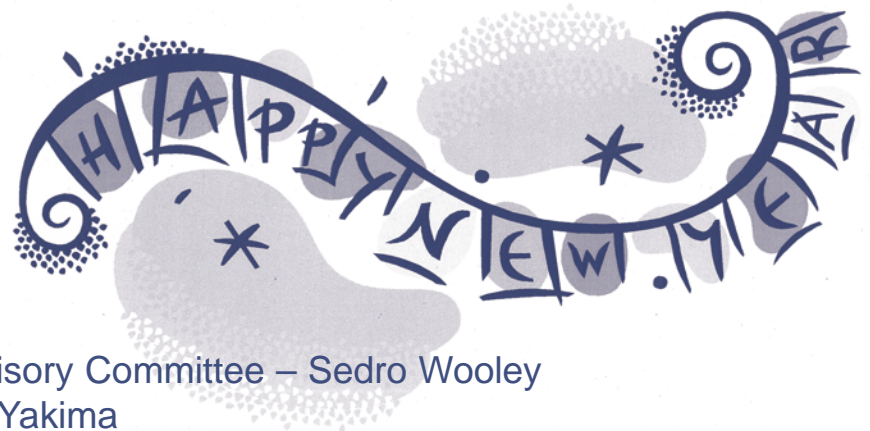
Thanks to Doreen Hinrichs, Gift Shop Coordinator for Retsil, Eleanor Chitwood Aux #217, for Spokane and Eva Miller, 4th Dist. Aux. for Orting. These annual events are sponsored by the Auxiliary however, the men from these posts also lend a hand.



Upcoming Events

(For the most current information on upcoming events visit www.dva.wa.gov and click on Public Events. To have events posted, send information to miriam@dva.wa.gov or colleen@dva.wa.gov)

Jan. 19, 2006	Governors Veterans Affairs Advisory Committee – Sedro Wooley
Jan 20-22, 2006	VFW Mid-Winter Conference – Yakima
Feb. 3-5, 2006	AL Mid-Winter Conference – Spokane
Feb. 12-18, 2006	National Salute To Hospitalized Veterans Week
March 5, 2006	Massing of the Colors – Ft. Lewis
March 16, 2006	Governors Veterans Affairs Advisory Committee - Retsil
March 25, 2006	Congressional Medal of Honor Day
April 9, 2006	Former Prisoner of War Recognition Day



Sorting Out Fact From Fiction on the Internet

The internet has opened a whole new world to millions, making access to information about just about anything available with a few keystrokes. In addition, the valuable benefit of e-mail has made it easy to keep in touch with friends, family and organization members. All of us have learned that just a few days away from our e-mail can cause a backlog of reading and catching up, and in the process we become "Power readers", forwarding, deleting and cleaning out our inbox.

However, remember the old adage "You can't believe everything you read"? That applies to what you read on the internet, as well.

The Washington Military Department Emergency Management Division has a "Rumor" link on their webpage, just for the purpose of keeping rumors that may be not quite accurate from being spread through the lightening speed of the internet.

It only takes a few moments to verify that what you are forwarding is accurate, so try and check it out before you hit the 'send' button. <http://emd.wa.gov/site-general/is-this-true.htm>

